

**Evaluation of the
Indianapolis Mayor Sponsored
Charter Schools**

**Christel House DORS
Second-year Charter Review**

2013-2014 School Year

Mary Jo Rattermann, Ph.D.

OFFICE OF EDUCATION INNOVATION

Office of the Mayor of Indianapolis

SECOND YEAR CHARTER REVIEW

Christel House DORS

November 18-19 & December 19, 2013

The Indianapolis Mayor's Office Second Year Charter Review (SYCR) is designed to assess the second year of the school as it adapts to the challenges facing new school. The Second Year Charter Review Protocol is based on the *Performance Framework*, which is used to determine a school's success relative to a common set of indicators, as well as school-based goals.

Consistent with the Indianapolis Mayor's Office Performance Framework, the following four core questions and sub-questions are examined to determine a school's success:

Is the educational program a success?

- 1.1. *Is the school's academic performance meeting state expectation, as measured by Indiana's accountability system?*
- 1.2. *Are students making sufficient and adequate gains, as measured by the Indiana Growth model?*
- 1.3. *Does the school demonstrate that students are improving, the longer they are enrolled at the school?*
- 1.4. *Is the school providing an equitable education to students of all races and socioeconomic backgrounds?*
- 1.5. *Is the school's attendance rate strong?*
- 1.6. *Is the school outperforming schools that the students would have been assigned to attend?*
- 1.7. *Is the school meeting its school-specific educational goals?*

Is the organization in sound fiscal health?

- 2.1. *Short term Health: Does the school demonstrate the ability to pay its obligations in the next 12 months?*
- 2.2. *Long term Health: Does the organization demonstrate long term financial health?*
- 2.3. *Does the organization demonstrate it has adequate financial management and systems?*

Is the organization effective and well-run?

- 3.1. *Is the school leader strong in his or her academic and organizational leadership?*
- 3.2. *Does the school satisfactorily comply with all its organizational structure and governance obligations?*
- 3.3. *Is the school's board active, knowledgeable and abiding by appropriate policies, systems and processes in its oversight?*
- 3.4. *Does the school's board work to foster a school environment that is viable and effective?*
- 3.5. *Does the school comply with applicable laws, regulations and provision of the charter agreement relating to the safety and security of the facility?*

Is the school providing the appropriate conditions for success?

- 4.1. Does the school have a high-quality curriculum and supporting materials for each grade?
- 4.2. Are the teaching processes (pedagogies) consistent with the school's mission?
- 4.3. For secondary students, does the school provide sufficient guidance on and support and preparation for post-secondary options?
- 4.4. Does the school effectively use learning standards and assessments to inform and improve instruction?
- 4.5. Has the school developed adequate human resource systems and deployed its staff effectively?
- 4.6. Is the school's mission clearly understood by all stakeholders?
- 4.7. Is the school climate conducive to student and staff success?
- 4.8. Is ongoing communication with students and parents clear and helpful?
- 4.9. Is the school properly maintaining special education files for its special needs students?
- 4.10. Is the school fulfilling its legal obligations related to access and services to English as Second Language (ESL) students?

COMPLETION OF THE SECOND YEAR CHARTER REVIEW

As part of its oversight of charter schools, the Mayor's Office authorized Research & Evaluation Resources (RER) to conduct site visits of schools in their second year of operation. The purpose is to present the school and the Mayor's Office a professional judgment on conditions and practices at the school, which are best provided through an external perspective. This report uses multiple sources of evidence to understand the school's performance. Evidence collection begins before the visit with the review of key documents and continues on-site through additional document review, classroom visits and interviews with any number of stakeholders. Findings provided by the site visit team can be used to celebrate what the school is doing well and prioritize its areas for improvement in preparation for renewal. It is the task of the site visit team to report on the following pre-identified aspects of the *Performance Framework* and to assist the Mayor's Office in its completion of the FYCR Protocol: ***Responses to sub-questions 4.1, 4.2, 4.4, 4.5, 4.6, 4.7, 4.8, 4.9 and 4.10 of Core Question 4.***

The outcome of this review will provide the school with written report that includes a judgment and supporting evidence on various aspects of the school, based on a rubric of indicators¹ developed for each of the four core questions and sub-questions in the *Performance Framework*. The assessment system utilizes the following judgments:

Does not meet standard

Approaching standard

Meets standard

¹ Rubric indicators are subject to revision by the Mayor's Office.

Christel House DORS Mission

Christel House DORS empowers students by providing them the tools necessary to achieve high school graduation and post-secondary success. DORS will reengage students who have previously left the educational system and allow students to choose their individual pathway to academic success. DORS will serve as a gateway for students to realize their hopes and dreams by becoming self-sufficient, contributing members of society.

Background and History of Christel House DORS

Christel House DORS received its charter from the Mayor of Indianapolis' Office of Education Innovation in 2011 and opened in August 2012 providing instruction to students in grades 9-12. Christel House DORS met its enrollment target of 175 students and has maintained a wait list of over 100 students throughout their initial year. 80% of new applicants heard of DORS through word of mouth of current students, a testament to the impact that the program is having on its students.

Christel House DORS is credit recovery program that grants high school diplomas through a blended curriculum. Through a unique partnership with Ivy Tech Community College, Christel House DORS students have the opportunity to attend classes being held on the Ivy Tech Campus in downtown Indianapolis. Having courses taught at Ivy Tech offers many advantages, with two of the most prominent being the exposure of Christel House DORS students to the college community and the opportunity for students to take dual credit college courses will still working toward their high school diploma.

Christel House DORS also offers classes in the evening at the Christel House Academy/Watanabe High School campus on the city's southside. Interestingly, the day and the evening courses attract very different student demographics, with the Ivy Tech campus students younger and predominantly African-American. Many of these students are unemployed or underemployed, and are enrolled at Christel House DORS in order to improve their employment prospects. The evening courses held at the Christel House Academy attract a very diverse group of students, many who are English as a Second Language Learners, and who are often employed full time and are working toward their high school diploma as well.

Support Services at Christel House DORS

Christel House DORS has created the positions of Resource Specialist and Community Navigator to provide support for students as they work toward their high school diploma. Resource Specialists provide counseling, academic advising and social work services to Christel House DORS students. The Resource Specialists have many responsibilities, and are crucial to student retention and student success. Some of their duties include, but are definitely not limited to, providing counseling to students who are experiencing problems at home or at school, and when possible, finding

community or school-based resources to overcome these obstacles, encouraging the students to work with the Christel House DORS teaching staff and leadership should they experience a failure or disappointment in their academic work, and engaging in the process of developing an individualized Learning Plan for each Christel House DORS student. The Resource Specialists are also tasked with maintaining student records, and most importantly, working with the teaching staff to ensure that the teachers are aware of any outside factors that may be affecting their student's academic performance. The position of Community Navigator is a relatively new one, and provides a crucial link between Christel House DORS and the local community. In a natural partnership with the Resource Specialists, the Community Navigator works to build partnerships with local businesses and community service providers for the benefit of the Christel House DORS students. The Community Navigator reaches out to the community to develop partnerships with organizations such as the Immigrant Welcome Center, The Children's Bureau, Stopover, Inc, which provides crisis support for the homeless, and Emberwood, which provides drug prevention workshops for schools. The Community Navigator will also support the Resources specialists when needed, acting as a liaison between the Resources Specialists and community resources that would benefit the Christel House DORS students.

The Christel House DORS Curriculum

Christel House DORS utilizes the APEX Learning online curriculum. The courses offered by APEX are aligned to the Common Core, as well as to Indiana state standards. The curriculum is organized into semesters, units, lessons, and activities. A typical lesson comprises a number of activities including studies, practices, readings, journals, labs, discussions, projects, explorations, reviews, and embedded assessments. APEX courses include many resources such as images, multimedia tutorials, interactive exercise, and weblinks. As used at Christel House DORS, classroom instructors specialize in areas of study such as math, and history, just as in a more traditional high school. However, unlike traditional high schools, the students in a particular classroom could be working at many different levels within that subject area. For instance, in a Math classroom, one student could be studying Algebra 1, another Algebra 2, and another working on Geometry. Each student works at their own pace, but can ask questions of the classroom instructor when they need help. Teachers will often offer a "mini-lesson" if several students appear to be struggling with the same concept, also the teaching staff will prepare lessons in core concepts that they believe their students will find useful. The teaching staff prepares exercises and assignments in basic skills that their students will need to succeed in their subject area. The process at Christel House DORS is truly a blended model, with a rigorous online curriculum combined with direct and differentiated instruction. The teachers at Christel House DORS are not simply looking over a student's shoulder at a computer screen, rather they are using the online curriculum as an integral tool to educate their students.

Courses at Christel House DORS last 16 weeks, with students enrolling into a class session and committing to being on site, working on their APEX online curriculum, during the hours that class is in session. All courses begun in a semester must be finished in that 16-week time frame. If a student does well in a particular course and is able to finish prior to the end of the 16-week

semester, they can enroll in another course immediately upon finishing the first. Enrolling in an additional course is contingent upon the student having enough time to finish the additional course within the original 16-week semester, and also requires the approval of their Resources Specialist and the course instructor. Because of the rolling admission policy of Christel House DORS, students can enter into a 16-week class up to 6 weeks into the semester and will receive credit for that course if they finish their work before the end of the original 16 weeks.

Gateway to College

Christel House DORS, in a collaborative partnership with Ivy Tech Community College, is employing the Gateway to College model. This model empowers students who have dropped out of high school or are not on track to graduate to earn a diploma and dual credit in a supportive college environment. Christel House DORS is part of a national network of Gateway to College schools. The program was created by Portland Community College in 2000 to help reconnect high school dropouts with their education. Through the program, students complete their high school diploma requirements at community and technical colleges while simultaneously earning college credits toward an associate's degree or certificate. Young people who had little chance of graduating from high school are achieving post-secondary success.

The Christel House DORS Gateway to College implementation of the model places students into the Ivy Tech college level courses based on the ACCUPLACER assessment. Students who are eligible to take courses at Ivy Tech will receive high school and college credit. The DORS Resource Specialists help students enroll in Ivy Tech courses and provide ongoing support to ensure that the students are successful. These courses are taught by Ivy Tech instructors or qualified DORS instructors and follow the approved Ivy Tech syllabi.

School Specific Goals

The leadership at Christel House DORS has set for themselves an ambitious set of school specific goals. The first performance goal, that DORS students will earn their high school diploma, is straightforward and will be measured by the number of students receiving their high school degree. A second goal is for DORS students to demonstrate the ability to be successful in the postsecondary environment. Christel House DORS leadership will measure this performance indicator through the number of students who complete two dual enrollment or vocational education course prior to their graduation from Christel House DORS. An additional school specific goal is designed to measure how well Christel House DORS provides support for their students outside of school setting. The goal is for students to utilize community resources to meet their needs or help meet the needs of others and will be measured by students participating in two community organization workshops or participate in two community service opportunities every month. The final school specific goal is related to enrollment, with Christel House DORS leadership setting as a goal that all 150 students seats will be filled for year one and will increase incrementally each following year.

The Evaluation Process

This report represents an evaluation about performance in each of the standards and indicators that are the responsibility of RER to evaluate. These indicators: 4.1, 4.2, 4.3, 4.4, 4.5, 4.6, 4.7, 4.8, 4.9 and 4.10 are outlined in the Performance Framework.

Research & Evaluation Resources staff engaged in a number of evidence-collecting activities. The focus of this evaluation was to gauge perceptions of key stakeholders at the school in relation to the areas of the performance framework that are part of the evaluation. RER conducted focus group discussions with students, and staff, , as well as interviews with the school administration. These focus groups and interviews were conducted over a 2-day period, with the classroom observations, teacher and student focus groups, as well as parent and leadership interviews completed on November 18 and 19, as part of the site visit. Additional information for the ESL indicators was gathered on December 19, 2013.

Five classrooms were observed using the instrument provided by the Office of Education Innovation. Each observation lasted approximately 30 minutes, and nearly all of the teaching staff was observed once. Classroom observers spent 2.5 hours (151 minutes) observing 5 classrooms, 23 students, and 5 teachers. On average, each observation lasted 29.5 minutes and the observed student to teacher ratio was 4.6:1. Two of the teachers were observed by both classroom observers at the same time in order to ensure inter-judge reliability.

In the following report, standards and indicators are listed with relevant evidence given related to the performance criteria. Following the discussion of each indicator, a summary of strengths and areas for attention are provided for the core question.

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

CHRISTEL HOUSE DORS

<i>Core Question 4: Is the school providing the appropriate conditions for success?</i>	<i>Finding</i>
<i>4.1. Does the school have a high-quality curriculum and supporting materials for each grade?</i>	Meets Standard
<i>4.2. Are the teaching processes (pedagogies) consistent with the school's mission?</i>	Meets Standard
<i>4.3 For secondary students, does the school provide sufficient guidance on and support and preparation for post-secondary options?</i>	Meets Standard
<i>4.4. Does the school effectively use learning standards and assessments to inform and improve instruction?</i>	Meets Standard
<i>4.5. Has the school developed adequate human resource systems and deployed its staff effectively?</i>	Approaching Standard
<i>4.6. Is the school's mission clearly understood by all stakeholders?</i>	Meets Standard
<i>4.7. Is the school climate conducive to student and staff success?</i>	Meets Standard
<i>4.8. Is ongoing communication with students and parents clear and helpful?</i>	Not Applicable
<i>4.9 Is the school properly maintaining special education files for its special needs students?</i>	Not Assessed
<i>4.10 Is the school fulfilling its legal obligations related to access and services to English as Second Language (ESL) students?</i>	Meets Standard

Standard 4: Is the school providing the appropriate conditions for success?

4.1. Does the school have a high-quality curriculum and supporting materials for each grade?	
Does not meet standard	The school presents significant concerns in <u>two or more</u> of the following areas: a) the curriculum does not align with the state standards; b) the school does not conduct systematic reviews of its curriculum to identify gaps based on student performance; c) the school does not regularly review scope and sequence to ensure presentation of content in time for testing; d) the sequence of topics across grade levels and content areas does not focus on core (prioritized) learning objectives; e) the staff lacks understanding and/or consensus as to how the curriculum documents and related program materials are used to effectively deliver instruction; f) there is a lack of programs and materials available to deliver the curriculum effectively.
Approaching standard	The school presents significant concerns in <u>one</u> of the following areas: a) the curriculum does not align with the state standards; b) the school does not conduct systematic reviews of its curriculum to identify gaps based on student performance; c) the school does not regularly review scope and sequence to ensure presentation of content in time for testing; d) the sequence of topics across grade levels and content areas does not focus on core (prioritized) learning objectives; e) the staff lacks understanding and/or consensus as to how the curriculum documents and related program materials are used to effectively deliver instruction; f) there is a lack of programs and materials available to deliver the curriculum effectively.
Meets standard	The school: a) curriculum aligns with the state standards; b) conducts systematic reviews of its curriculum to identify gaps based on student performance; c) the school regularly reviews scope and sequence to ensure presentation of content in time for testing; d) has a sequence of topics across grade levels and content areas that is prioritized and focuses on the core learning objectives; e) the staff understands and uniformly uses curriculum documents and related program materials to effectively deliver instruction; f) programs and materials are available to deliver the curriculum effectively.

Christel House DORS uses a blended learning model to meet the needs of their students. An online curriculum is provided by the APEX digital curriculum, while one on one and classroom lectures are provided by classroom teachers. The APEX online learning curriculum provides a rigorous curriculum that is aligned to the state standards (indicator a). Systematic review of the curriculum by Christel House DORS is not possible (indicator b), nor is a review of scope and sequence to ensure presentation of content in time for testing (indicator c). The sequence of topics across grade levels is also set by the APEX program, as are core-learning objectives (indicator d).

The teaching staff at Christel House DORS understand and uniformly use the APEX curriculum to the benefit of their students. The blended model employed by Christel House DORS is a challenging teaching environment, yet the instructors at Christel House seem to move from one topic to another with ease. They are very skilled at providing related materials and documents of their own design to append to the APEX Learning online curriculum in order to enhance their student's learning experience (indicator e). As one instructor noted, "we didn't want to be wedded to APEX.... There are a lot of skills and broad themes that are applicable (to all students) and they need to practice them on a daily basis." Regarding the quality and use of APEX it was noted that "APEX is a good framework but it is very dense. We have been balancing it using the blended learning model. Our classes are primarily driven by APEX, but only 60/40 (60% APEX)...Last year it was 90/10. The other 40% is in class learning." Another teacher noted that "we are seeing the

value of the in class stuff.... The students are learning it as we go along.” One instructor remarked that “the challenge is finding the overlapping skills and then hitting those when they (the students) need it. We were more APEX centric but now we are adding more lessons and using a truly blended model. We need to go to the more blended model.”

The teaching staff at Christel House DORS are moving toward a more blended model by developing classroom management processes that work for their population. One instructor described the classroom schedule that works best for her students as beginning the class with direct, traditional instruction and then she answers questions from the previous class or that students had arrived to on their own. Following the questions, the students each work on their APEX courses and as they have questions the instructor works with students one-on-one. If there is a group of 4 or 5 students having similar problems, she will put them in a group and let them work through the problem. Another model used by a different classroom instructor is the use of long term projects or exercises that increase the students’ basic skills. This instructor noted that “if they are falling back on APEX I will increase the instruction... maybe print out some of the exercises and go back to them... you have to be flexible.” Of particular importance to the students and staff when using APEX are the Foundation courses, which provide structured remediation for students who are below grade level. When a class includes students working on Foundations, the teaching staff report that they are particularly attentive to the student’s progress and pacing.

Programs and materials are available for the teaching staff to deliver the curriculum effectively in the form of laptops for each student, which the students take with them from class to class, and after an initial grace period upon enrolling at Christel House DORS, they can take home (indicator f). The arrangement made for classroom space with Ivy Tech and Christel House Academy means that the Christel House DORS faculty do not have a classroom they can call their own, however, the staff manages to provide quality instruction to their students on a daily basis despite not having a place to keep their materials.

Areas of Strength: The teaching staff at Christel House DORS are expertly enacting a true blended model of adult education. They are also reflectively modifying their classroom practices to provide the best possible educational experience for their students.

Recommendations: If possible, the teaching staff would benefit from a storage area to keep their classroom materials at each location. Currently the staff is carrying their materials from site to site.

4.2. Are the teaching processes (pedagogies) consistent with the school's mission?	
Does not meet standard	The school presents significant concerns in <u>two or more</u> of the following areas: a) the curriculum is not implemented in the majority of classrooms according to its design; b) as delivered, instruction is not focused on core learning objectives; c) the pace of instruction/lessons and content delivery lacks the appropriate rigor and challenge; d) instructional activities lack variety and/or limited use of differentiated strategies to engage a wide range of student interests, abilities and learning needs; e) staff do not receive feedback on instructional practices.
Approaching standard	The school presents significant concerns in <u>one</u> of the following areas: a) the curriculum is not implemented in the majority of classrooms according to its design; b) as delivered, instruction is not focused on core learning objectives; c) the pace of instruction/lessons and content delivery lacks the appropriate rigor and challenge; d) instructional activities lack variety and/or limited use of differentiated strategies to engage a wide range of student interests, abilities and learning needs; e) staff do not receive feedback on instructional practices.
Meets standard	The school exhibits the following characteristics: a) the curriculum is implemented in the majority of classrooms according to its design; b) as delivered, instruction is focused on core learning objectives; c) the pace of instruction/lessons and content delivery possesses the appropriate rigor and challenge; d) instructional activities possess variety and/or use of differentiated strategies to engage a wide range of student interests, abilities and learning needs; e) supplies sufficient feedback to staff on instructional practices.

The nature of the instructional model at Christel House DORS means that there is no one curriculum being implemented in the classroom (indicator a), and as delivered the APEX learning curriculum is by its very nature focused on core learning objectives. The pace of instruction and content delivery is not comparable to that of a traditional classroom, however, within the context of a blended instructional model, the teaching staff at Christel House DORS are remarkably skilled at meeting the needs of students at very different levels of skill and across many different courses being studied (indicator c). The nature of the blended model being implemented at Christel House DORS does not allow for differentiated instruction in the traditional sense. The classroom instructors were observed to be using a mix of direct instruction and individual and group work. The pace of instruction during any lectures given was seen to be effective during these observations. The lecture topics were interesting and connected well with the topics being covered across the curriculum. For instance, in the Social Studies class, a mini-lesson on “Religions of the World” was presented, offering students an opportunity to engage with the materials as a group and also providing a break from the online content.

Student engagement was remarkably high throughout all the classroom observations. The students clearly came to class to work, and were engaged and busy throughout the class period. It was noted during observations, however, that students often entered the classroom late and disrupted the rest of the class, particularly in those classes where a teacher was beginning the session with a mini-lesson. An additional problem, noted by Ms. Emily Masengale, as well as by the teaching staff was course attendance. Students are missing class frequently enough that it has become a problem for some to complete their coursework in the allotted 16-week time period. Leadership and staff are working together to encourage students to come to class, and are providing them with social supports, such as attendance awards, to motivate them to come to class. It was noted during the teacher focus groups that a strategy to address the attendance issue would be to involve the teaching staff more in the process of orientation. Currently, the teaching staff plays a minimal role in student

orientation. It was expressed by several teachers that their involvement in the orientation process would allow them to “give the students a more accurate view of what classes are like” and in that way establish the expectations for consistent attendance early.

A final problem noted by the teaching staff during focus group interviews as the addition of students to a class as much as 6 weeks into a 16 week semester. They note that it is difficult to bring student who may not have the background in the subject area up to speed on the APEX system and on the basics of the subject being taught. It was expressed by the teaching staff that they understand the value of rolling admission and allowing students to add a class after the semester has begun, but recommended a cutoff for entering a course that was sooner in the semester.

Interviews with the Christel House DORS Principal, Emily Masengale, revealed that they are implementing the TAP teacher evaluation system (indicator e), and the teaching staff reported that they receive frequent feedback on their teaching.

Areas of Strength: Christel House DORS is providing high quality blended instruction for their students.

Recommendations: Attendance in class, as well as tardiness, is an issue that has the potential to seriously disrupt student success. The leadership at Christel House DORS is aware of the issues and are taking steps to address them, and should be encouraged to continue to think of imaginative ways to tackle these problems.

4.3 For secondary students, does the school provide sufficient guidance on and support and preparation for post-secondary options?	
Does not meet standard	The school presents significant concerns in two or more of the following areas: a) the school's academic program lacks challenging coursework (e.g., Advanced Placement courses, internships, independent study) to prepare students for rigorous post-secondary opportunities; b) there is a lack of high expectations to motivate and prepare students for post-secondary academic opportunities; c) insufficient material resources and personnel guidance are available to inform students of post-secondary options; d) limited opportunities exist for extracurricular engagement and activities (e.g., athletics, academic clubs, vocational) to increase post-secondary options; e) the school does not meet Indiana Core 40 graduation standard requirements.
Approaching standard	The school presents significant concerns in one of the following areas: a) the school's academic program lacks challenging coursework (e.g., Advanced Placement courses, internships, independent study) to prepare students for rigorous post-secondary opportunities; b) there is a lack of high expectations to motivate and prepare students for post-secondary academic opportunities; c) insufficient material resources and personnel guidance are available to inform students of post-secondary options; d) limited opportunities exist for extracurricular engagement and activities (e.g., athletics, academic clubs, vocational) to increase post-secondary options; e) the school does not meet Indiana Core 40 graduation standard requirements.
Meets standard	The school: a) has challenging coursework (e.g., Advanced Placement courses, internships, independent study) to prepare students for rigorous post-secondary opportunities; b) has high expectations to motivate and prepare students for post-secondary academic opportunities; c) has sufficient material resources and personnel guidance available to inform students of post-secondary options; d) presents opportunities for extracurricular engagement and activities (e.g., athletics, academic clubs, vocational) to increase post-secondary options; e) meets or exceeds Indiana Core 40 graduation standard requirements.

The APEX Learning online curriculum being used at Christel House DORS meets or exceeds the Core 40 graduation requirements, and students are encouraged to excel and move ahead in their goal of attaining a high school diploma (indicator e).

The partnership between Christel House DORS and Ivy Tech offers students a unique opportunity to engage in challenging coursework (indicator a) and sets high expectations to motivate and prepares students for post-secondary opportunities (indicator b). The obvious strength of the partnership with Ivy Tech is the ease with which Christel House DORS students can enroll in Ivy Tech classes. There are other advantages as well. It was noted during focus group interviews with the Resource Specialists, teaching staff and students that offering classes on a college campus to students who did not finish high school gives these students the opportunity to engage with higher-education as they work toward their high school diploma. These students do not have to “picture” themselves on a college campus, they come to the Ivy Tech college campus on a daily basis to complete their coursework. Additionally, the close proximity of the Christel House DORS support staff and teachers allows them to advocate for their students with Ivy Tech administration and instructors on behalf of their student, an example of which was observed during the site visit when a Resource Specialist was contacted by a Christel House DORS student regarding problems signing up for an Ivy Tech class. The Resource Specialist accompanied the student to the Ivy Tech offices to work out the issue.

Christel House DORS has sufficient material resources and personnel available to inform students of post-secondary options (indicator c). The support of the Resource Specialists and the Community Navigator is invaluable to Christel House DORS students as they consider their opportunities after their high school diploma. Interviews with the Resource Specialists and Community Navigator revealed staff members who were knowledgeable about career options, community resources and post-secondary possibilities.

Because of the unique nature of Christel House DORS students, there is very little attention paid to extra-curricular activities such as athletics and clubs. Christel House DORS does provide activities that relate to college and career success, such as campus trips to local universities and college and career events.

Areas of Strength: The staff at Christel House DORS are supportive of the students achieving their goal of earning a high school diploma, and equally important, the staff encourages the students to set ambitious goals for their lives after they have their diploma.

Recommendations: None at this time.

4.4. Does the school effectively use learning standards and assessments to inform and improve instruction?	
Does not meet standard	The school presents significant concerns in <u>two or more</u> of the following areas: a) standardized and/or classroom assessments are not accurate or useful measures of established learning standards/objectives; b) assessment results are not received by classroom teachers in a timely or useful manner to influence instructional decisions; c) assessments lack sufficient variety to guide instruction for a wide range of student learning abilities; d) there is limited frequency or use of assessments to inform instructional decisions effectively; e) assessment results are not used to guide instruction or make adjustments to curriculum.
Approaching standard	The school presents significant concerns in <u>one</u> of the following areas: a) standardized and/or classroom assessments are not accurate or useful measures of established learning standards/objectives; b) assessment results are not received by classroom teachers in a timely or useful manner to influence instructional decisions; c) assessments lack sufficient variety to guide instruction for a wide range of student learning abilities; d) there is limited frequency or use of assessments to inform instructional decisions effectively; e) assessment results are not used to guide instruction or make adjustments to curriculum.
Meets standard	The school: a) standardized and/or classroom assessments are accurate and useful measures of established learning standards/objectives; b) assessment results are received by classroom teachers in a timely and useful manner to influence instructional decisions; c) assessments have sufficient variety to guide instruction for a wide range of student learning abilities; d) there is sufficient frequency or use of assessments to inform instructional decisions effectively; e) assessment results are used to guide instruction or make adjustments to curriculum.

The APEX online learning system used at Christel House DORS provides a large bank of assessments tools that are accurate and useful measures of the learning standards and objectives in each course (indicator a). The online assessments provided by APEX are available to the classroom teachers almost immediately (indicator b). The teaching staff reports that they find the APEX assessment data accurate and useful, noting that they can see online when a student takes a particular quiz or test, which questions were answered incorrectly and even how long the student took to finish the assessment. They also noted that APEX contains a calendar function that allows them to monitor student progress to ensure that learning was happening at a pace that would allow the student to finish in the allotted time. They noted that this allowed them to see “red flags” regarding student progress and work with the student before they fell too far behind. They reported that they found all of this data useful, allowing them to go over material students may have answered incorrectly, or review skills that the assessment revealed they were lacking.

To add to the variety of assessments used at Christel House DORS, the teaching staff will often develop assessments for classroom use (indicator c). These are teacher scored tests and quizzes and are included in the students’ final grade. In addition to quizzes and tests, essays and papers are also assigned to ensure that the students increase their writing skills as well. The teaching staff noted that they are particularly vigilant regarding disparities between online and classroom performance, noting that some students may be doing well on APEX but not on the classroom exercises and assignments, suggesting that they might need additional hands-on work.

The APEX assessments, as well as the formal and informal classroom assessments, ensure that the students are assessed with sufficient frequency to inform instructional decisions (indicator d). The

teaching staff makes full use of the assessment data provided by APEX. The staff reported that every Friday they met to review student data and assess their progress. They also noted that nearly every morning they took the opportunity to discuss any students who may be struggling academically or personally. These conversations directly led to added attention from the staff if the problem was minor, or adjustments in the student's learning plan if the problem was major (indicator e).

Areas of Strength: The teaching staff at Christel House DORS uses to data to inform practice at all levels of the curriculum.

The teaching staff has effectively added a variety of assessment to those provide by APEX to ensure that they have an accurate picture of how their students are progressing.

The teaching staff effectively uses the data provided by APEX to monitor their students' progress and to step in when necessary.

Recommendations: None at this time.

4.5. Has the school developed adequate human resource systems and deployed its staff effectively?	
Does not meet standard	The school presents significant concerns in <u>two or more</u> of the following areas: a) hiring processes are not organized to support the success of new staff members; b) inefficient or insufficient deployment of faculty and staff limits instructional time and capacity; c) faculty and staff are not certified/trained in areas to which they are assigned; d) professional development (PD) does not relate to demonstrated needs for instructional improvement; e) PD is not determined through analyses of student attainment and improvement; f) the teacher evaluation plan is not explicit and regularly implemented with a clear process and criteria.
Approaching standard	The school presents significant concerns in <u>one</u> of the following areas: a) hiring processes are not organized to support the success of new staff members; b) inefficient or insufficient deployment of faculty and staff limits instructional time and capacity; c) faculty and staff are not certified/trained in areas to which they are assigned; d) professional development (PD) does not relate to demonstrated needs for instructional improvement; e) PD is not determined through analyses of student attainment and improvement; f) the teacher evaluation plan is not explicit and regularly implemented with a clear process and criteria.
Meets standard	The school exhibits the following characteristics: a) hiring processes are organized and used to support the success of new staff members; b) the school deploys sufficient number of faculty and staff to maximize instructional time and capacity; c) faculty and staff are certified/trained in areas to which they are assigned; d) professional development (PD) is related to demonstrated needs for instructional improvement; e) PD opportunities are determined through analyses of student attainment and improvement; f) the teacher evaluation plan is explicit and regularly implemented with a clear process and criteria.

All teachers at Christel House DORS are certified or credentialed in their teaching area. The majority of the teachers are teaching a course load that appears manageable, and the various staff members have distinct roles. The teachers are all teaching in areas in which they are certified. Overall, the staff is deployed to best utilize their skills and training (indicators b & c). Hiring process are organized around the mission of Christel House DORS, with Ms. Masengale reporting that “We post our job openings through the DoE and look for candidates with the credentials, experience in content area and preferably with at risk students, and that express mission fit with the organization, willing to do whatever it takes for student success (indicator a). As a new school, Christel House DORS does not currently have a new teacher mentorship program in place, but one is planned as they bring on new teachers.

As reported by the teaching staff, the professional development offered at Christel House DORS is not determined through an analysis of student data (indicator e). Rather, the professional development decisions are made by the Christel House leadership, often based upon their perceptions of what is needed by the teaching staff to enact the blended model of instruction. The professional development offered at Christel House DORS is related to the need for instructional improvement (indicator d). As a relatively new school operating with a non-traditional model, it is logical that the professional development should focus on skills and knowledge needed to enact the model. Focus group interviews revealed that the teaching staff find the professional development offered by Christel House DORS interesting and valuable. They particularly noted the Gateway to College conference as being very applicable to their daily work, as well as the professional

development sessions offered by Gateway to College staff who came to Christel House DORS. They also noted that they would be attending a session at Butler University on the Common Core. It was noted that they would appreciate more professional development in the use of classroom technology, in particular the use of smartboards.

The teaching staff conveyed that they fully understood the teaching evaluation system being implemented at Christel House DORS (indicator f). Informal classroom observations occur frequently, and the staff conveyed that they are also evaluated formally on a regular basis. The reported that they understand the TAP system and that it was covered in detail at the beginning of the academic year when a master teacher from Christel House Academy and Ms. Masengale worked through the TAP rubric with the teaching staff. Additionally, three Friday professional development sessions were spent discussing the rubric indicators. Indicators specific to a Blended Learning environment were also shared with the teaching staff. The teaching staff described a process of classroom observations, self-evaluation and then discussion with school leadership over the results of these exercises. They also noted that their pay is linked to student performance and that they understood the formula used to calculate salary.

Areas of Strength: The current teacher evaluation system is in place and providing good information to staff and leadership.

Recommendations: Providing professional development based on the analysis of student attainment and improvement should be offered.

Professional development on the use of technology in the classroom, as requested by the teaching staff, should be offered in the near future.

4.6. Is the school's mission clearly understood by all stakeholders?	
Does not meet standard	The school presents significant concerns in <u>both</u> of the following areas: a) significant disagreements exist among stakeholders about the school's mission; b) there is a lack of widespread knowledge and commitment to the intentions of the school's mission.
Approaching standard	The school presents significant concerns in <u>one</u> of the following areas: a) significant disagreements exist among stakeholders about the school's mission; b) there is a lack of widespread knowledge and commitment to the intentions of the school's mission.
Meets standard	The school: a) has a mission that is shared by all stakeholders; b) has stakeholders possessing widespread knowledge and commitment to the intentions of the school's mission.

The mission of Christel House DORS is shared and well understood by all stakeholders (indicators a & b). Focus group interviews with staff and students revealed that they had common views regarding the mission and goals of Christel House DORS.

Interviews with the teaching staff and with the Resource Specialists and Community Navigator revealed a remarkable working relationship that is always mindful of the mission of Christel House DORS. When asked about the role of Resources Specialists, the teaching staff noted that they were essential to the success of the Christel House DORS mission. One teacher noted, "they have the more difficult job, they are dealing with all the social stuff. The stories that the students have told us about what they (the Resource Specialists) do... it means I'm not doing all the work that the Resource Specialists have to do."

From the Resource Specialists and Community Navigator point of view, they are there to support and enhance the education provided by the teaching staff. It was noted during interviews that the mission of Christel House DORS is to "engage a lost population that is forgotten. The assumption is that high school dropouts are at fault and it was something that could have been avoided.. they deserve a second chance."

Areas of Strength: The Mission of Christel House DORS is well understood by staff and leadership, all of whom are very dedicated to bringing that mission to their students.

Recommendations: None at this time.

4.7. Is the school climate conducive to student and staff success?	
Does not meet standard	The school presents significant concerns in <u>two or more</u> of the following areas with no evidence of a credible plan to address them: a) The school does not have clearly stated rules that enforce positive behavior; b) the school's discipline approach does not possess high expectations for student behavior; c) interactions between faculty and students are disrespectful and/or unsupportive and there are non-existing or unclear processes for resolution of conflicts; d) interactions between faculty and administration are unprofessional and/or unproductive.
Approaching standard	The school presents significant concerns in <u>one</u> of the following areas with no evidence of a credible plan to address it: a) The school does not have clearly stated rules that enforce positive behavior; b) the school's discipline approach does not possess high expectations for student behavior; c) interactions between faculty and students are disrespectful and/or unsupportive and there are non-existing or unclear processes for resolution of conflicts; d) interactions between faculty and administration are unprofessional and /or unproductive.
Meets standard	The school exhibits the following characteristics: a) the school has clearly stated rules that enforce positive behavior; b) the school's discipline approach possesses high expectations for student behavior; c) interactions between faculty and students are respectful and supportive and faculty and students are clear about processes for resolution of conflicts; d) interactions between faculty and administration are professional and constructive.

The culture at Christel House DORS is one of respect and support between students and staff. Christel House DORS students have come to the school to have a second chance at their high school diploma and they value the staff and their fellow students. Christel House DORS has clearly stated rules that enforce student behavior (indicator a). The discipline plan possesses high expectation for student behavior (indicator b), with expectations regarding student behavior clearly outlined in the student handbook. The handbook is given to students during orientation and they must sign a document stating that they understand all student policies

Interactions between students and staff are respectful and supportive, with students noting during the focus group that “The culture here is good. The culture is respectful and there isn’t any bullying” (indicator c). Interactions between faculty and administrations are also respectful, professional and supportive (indicator d), with one faculty member noting, “the school leadership here is great—the best I’ve ever worked with.”

Areas of Strength: Staff, students and the school leadership are all in agreement regarding the positive behaviors expected of the students.

Recommendations: None at this time.

4.8. Is ongoing communication with students and parents clear and helpful?	
Does not meet standard	The school presents significant concerns in <u>two or more</u> of the following areas: a) there is a lack of active and ongoing communication between the school and parents; b) school communication is neither timely nor relevant to the parental concerns; c) student academic progress and achievement reports are not clearly reported and/or misunderstood; d) the school's communication methods are not well-designed to meet the needs of a diverse set of parents (e.g., not communicating in parents' native languages, communicating only in writing when many parents cannot read, holding meetings at inconvenient times for parents).
Approaching standard	The school presents significant concerns in <u>one</u> of the following areas: a) there is a lack of active and ongoing communication between the school and parents; b) school communication is neither timely nor relevant to the parental concerns; c) student academic progress and achievement reports are not clearly reported and/or misunderstood; d) the school's communication methods are not well-designed to meet the needs of a diverse set of parents (e.g., not communicating in parents' native languages, communicating only in writing when many parents cannot read, holding meetings at inconvenient times for parents).
Meets standard	The school: a) has active and ongoing communication between the school and parents; b) utilizes communications that are both timely and relevant to the parental concerns; c) communicates student academic progress and achievement in reports that are understood by parents; d) the school's communication methods are designed to meet the needs of a diverse set of parents (e.g., communicating in parents' native languages, not communicating only in writing when many parents cannot read, holding meetings at convenient times for parents).

The student population of Christel House DORS is predominantly over 18, and there are very few whose parents are involved in their education, consequently this particular standard does not apply.

4.9. Do the school's special education files demonstrate that it is in legal compliance and is moving towards best practice?	
Does not meet standard	The school's special education files present concerns in <u>two or more</u> of the following areas: a) services outlined within Individualized Education Plans (IEPs) do not adequately match the exceptional needs of the student; b) each need identified within the IEP does not have a corresponding goal and plan for assessment; c) all goals are not rigorous or based on state or national learning standards; d) evidence does not demonstrate that goals have evolved each year as the student developed; e) specifically designed curriculum is not outlined.
Approaching standard	The school's special education files present concerns in <u>one</u> or more of the following areas: a) services outlined within Individualized Education Plans (IEPs) do not adequately match the exceptional needs of the student; b) each need identified within the IEP does not have a corresponding goal and plan for assessment; c) all goals are not rigorous or based on state or national learning standards; d) evidence does not demonstrate that goals have evolved each year as the student developed; e) specifically designed curriculum is not outlined.
Meets standard	<u>All</u> of the following are evident in the school's special education files: a) services outlined within Individualized Education Plans (IEPs) adequately match the exceptional needs of the student; b) each need identified within the IEP has a corresponding goal and plan for assessment; c) each goal is rigorous and is based on state and national learning standards; d) explicit evidence exists to demonstrate that goals have evolved each year as the student develops; e) specifically designed curriculum is outlined.

Not enough data to assess.

All of the following are evident in the school's special education files: (a) services outlined within Individualized Education Plans (IEPs) adequately match the exceptional needs of the student; (b) each need identified within the IEP has a corresponding goal and plan for assessment; (c) each goal is rigorous and is based on state and national learning standards; (d) explicit evidence exists to demonstrate that goals have evolved each year as the student develops; (e) specifically designed curriculum is outlined.

CHA-DORS is in the early stages of offering services. The staff were open and welcoming of our evaluation process, but currently have no students with IEPs enrolled. Given their lack of data, we were unable to provide an authentic assessment of the program, so a score of "Not Enough Data Available to Assess" has been given for Standard 4.9. In light of this, the following narrative has been developed to provide context of the system in place at CHA-DORS.

It is apparent that CHA-DORS has every intention and system in place to meet the complex needs of students with IEPs. They have a highly qualified and experienced staff in place. They have established an account in iIEP, they have internal databases in place, and have reached out to vocational rehabilitation services. They also have ADA compliant facilities in place, as well as internal processes to accept, assess, and support students with IEPs. All indications are that CHA-DORS is ready and willing to serve students with IEPs.

4.10. Is the school fulfilling its legal obligations related to access and services to students with limited English proficiency?	
Does not meet standard	The school is <u>not</u> fulfilling its legal obligations regarding ESL students, and requires substantial improvement in order to achieve conditions such as the following: a) appropriate staff have a clear understanding of current legislation research and effective practices relating to the provision of ESL services; b) relationships with students, parents, and external providers that are well-managed and comply with law and regulation.
Approaching standard	The school is not yet completely fulfilling all of its legal obligations regarding ESL students, and requires <i>some</i> (but not considerable) improvement to fully achieve conditions such as the following: a) appropriate staff have a clear understanding of current legislation, research and effective practices relating to the provision of ESL services; b) relationships with students, parents, and external providers that are well-managed and comply with law and regulation.
Meets standard	The school is fulfilling its legal obligations regarding ESL students, as indicated by conditions such as the following: a) appropriate staff have a clear understanding of current legislation, research and effective practices relating to the provision of ESL services; b) relationships with students, parents, and external providers that are well-managed and comply with law and regulation.

Christel House DORS has one staff member, Ms. Allison Walters, who is the ESL coordinator for the school. Ms. Walters is knowledgeable in current legislation regarding the education of ESL students, and is familiar with Indiana's English Language Proficiency Standards. Ms. Walters also displayed a great deal of understanding and familiarity with the goals of these standards and the how they are to be implemented. She has had extensive experience in ESL education in other states, and brings that expertise to Christel House DORS, to the great benefit of her students. Ms. Walters reported that she was able to participate in professional development opportunities relating to effective best practices in the field of ESL.

An interview with Ms. Walters revealed that she designed the ESL curriculum map for Christel House DORS, as well as finding the materials being used. She displayed a remarkable understanding of the challenges of educating and ESL population in the context of the Christel House DORS blended learning model, noting that the population she works with displays a wide variety of ability levels. She has noted that she is supported by the Christel House leadership and teaching staff and that "I can use best practices in my field and have done ESL professional development with the teaching staff, as well as some on differentiation."

Ms. Walters is also very familiar with the Indiana Department of Education Office of English Language Learning & Migrant Education Guidelines to Satisfy Legal Requirements of Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964. Mr. Dietrich has begun many effective ESL practices to ensure that Paramount is in compliance with these standards, including (but not limited to) providing students with the mandated language proficiency testing within 30 days, notification of parents of the results of these tests and their student's placement, placement of ESL students in the grade level that was appropriate for their age rather than their language competency, providing students with both push-in and pull-out services, and providing supports and services to help his students with their socio-emotional adjustments as well (indicator a).

Ms. Walters also ensures that relationships with students, parents and external providers are well-managed and comply with the law (indicator b). As noted above, Ms. Walters provides services that comply with Indiana state law, as well as with the standards and best practices required by the Indiana Department of Education.

Areas of Strength: ESL services at Christel House DORS meet both mandate practices and are implemented using ESL best practices. Additionally, Ms. Wallace is a valuable asset to the school.

Recommendations: None at this time.